(b) whether any foreign assistance has been required in this regard; and

(c) if so, what are the names of the countries from where assistance is being sought?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHIVRAJ PATIL). (a) to (c) The modernisation of the Armed Forces is a continuous process. Keeping in view the changed security environment and induction of the latest tech nology weapon systems in the region, our plans for procurement of weapon systems for modernisation of Armed Forces are kept constantly under review to meet any threat to our peace, progress, security and stability.

For the modernisation of the Armed Forces, import of sophisticated weapon systems are resorted to, when these arc not available in adequate quantities through indigenous sources. Such imports are made from a number of countries. Orders of import are placed keeping in view factors such as technical specification prices, delivery schedules, credit terms etc.

It will not be in the national interest to divulge information regarding details of modernisation effort's and sources for the procurement of defence stores.

Soda-Economic study of North Bengal Districts

1995. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

fa) whether Government have decided to send a team of experts of the Planning Commission to study the sociopolitico-econoimic conditions in the North Bengal districts;

(b) if so, whether such a team has since visited the districts of North Bengal;

(c) whether any report has since been submitted by the team; and

(d) if so. the details of the if any?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): fa) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Separate administration arrangements for Rural Development

1996. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased t_0 refer to the reply to Unstorred Question 3023 given m the Rajya Sabha on the 20th August, 1987 and state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report of Dr. G. V. K. Rao Committee set up by the Planning Commission, which recommended for separate administration arrangements for rural developments; and

(b) if so, whether any action has since been taken on the recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IM PLEMENTATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Comments from 29 States/ Union Territory Administrations have been received on thp recommendations made by Dr. G. V. K. Ra_0 Committee. The matter has to be placed before the National Development Council (NDC) for consideration before final decisions are taken.

Goodwill Visit of INS Ganga to East and South East Asia

1997. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Navy's guided missile carrier, INs Ganga, had gone